

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 16th July 2019

Present:	Cllr. Mike Smith (Chairman)	Cllr. Stephen Block
	Cllr. Christine Dinnin	Cllr. Catherine Hammon
	Cllr. Ian Knight	Cllr. Kay Jancey
	Cllr. David Stock	Cllr. Emma Waltham
	Jane Allsop (Clerk)	
Police:	Sergeant Duncan Wallace (until 1919)	

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: Cllr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman), Helen McCash.
County Cllr. Ken Crofton, District Cllr. Sophie Bell

2. Public Participation

Cllr. Smith invited Sergeant Duncan Wallace to report on policing matters.

- **Police report from Duncan Wallace**

Sergeant Wallace said that there have been 14 incidents reported since the 1st June, 3 of which were domestic, non-recordable items.

Among the remaining incidents there were 2 burglaries to dwellings during this period. One incident has been detected and the offender is being charged. There were also 2 thefts from vehicles.

Recorded incidents have gone up over the previous year. However, compared to the overall increase in East Hertfordshire, Watton-at-Stone is “holding its own”. He is expecting more anti-social behaviour (ASB) calls because of the lighter evenings and holidays.

Sergeant Wallace said that Cllr. McCash was unable to attend the last quarterly-police-meeting (Police Locality Group meetings). He suggested that if the Parish Council has any issues, then Cllr. McCash should raise them at the next Police Locality Group meeting, which is scheduled for September.

The Police are still having to cope with a reduced number of officers but are currently managing to keep a lid on things.

Sergeant Wallace was asked about the current state of the drug problem within the village. He said that the problem is very much reduced since one resident was removed from the village. The associated ASB reports have also greatly reduced since 2 or 3 years ago. However, young people, often 10-11-year olds, are still getting hold of laughing-gas canisters. Although it is not illegal to be in possession of these, it is illegal to trade them. The next step for young people using laughing gas can tend to be towards the use of cannabis and then on to cocaine and heroin.

Sergeant Duncan Wallace was thanked for his attendance and then left the meeting.

3. Chairman’s/Clerk’s Report

Cllr. Smith said that he had 2 planning decisions that have arrived since the agenda was published. Refer to item 6 b, Planning decisions.

4. Declaration of Interests

Cllr. Smith declared an interest in item 6 b planning decision - 6 Rivershill (Cllr. Smith is in the process of purchasing this property).

5. Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 18th June 2019**

Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

b) Review of actions

1. Inspect the camp site on Station Road to see if it has been cleared

Cllr. Dinnin said she had inspected the site and the camp has been cleared.

2. Inform PCSO Sally Brooks about Mr. Thornhill using 20 High Street as his address

Cllr. Knight said that Cllr. McCash had reported the incident to PCSO Sally Brooks, who asked to see all the associated mail. Cllr. Knight said he had collected all the mail addresses to Mr. Thornhill at 20 High Street and had given it to Cllr. McCash, who had forwarded it on to PCSO Sally Brooks.

Cllr. Knight has told the occupant at 20 High Street to contact him if he gets any further mail addressed to Mr. Thornhill.

3. Check prices of Glasdon UK salt bins and if appropriate order 2 bins

The Glasdon prices after discount were close the prices that County Councillor Ken Crofton had quoted and therefore two salt bins have been purchased.

Cllr. Smith and Cllr. Block to install the two salt bins.

Action: M. Smith/S. Block

4. Try to remove graffiti from bench on the Lammas: outstanding.

Action: J. Meischke

5. Contact EHDC re pile of tyres bedside recycle bin in Mill Lane

The Clerk said that she did not contact EHDC about the tyres as they were on Woodhall Estate land, but e-mailed Lindsay Holt. Cllr. Smith said that the tyres were removed soon after our last Parish Council meeting.

c) Action points resolved

1. Write to all applications re Parish Council vacancy
2. Put notice on website, Facebook and September issue of Parish News re Parish Councillor co-option
3. Ask War Memorial contractor to install concrete base around ornate village sign
4. Contact Tim Hill (Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust) to a meeting date
5. Arrange for Environment Sub-Committee to attend meeting with Tim Hill
6. Write to the planning department re 6 Rivershill
7. Write to the planning department re land at rear of 35, 37, 37a Station Road
8. Write to the planning department re 2 applications for 82 High Street
9. Pick up Mr. Thornhill's mail from 20 High Street
10. Advertise Urgent Care Unit threat of closure on Facebook
11. Sketch out sportsfield plans for discussion with Working Group
12. Ask one of the planning officers to meet with the working group
13. **Ask EHDC to monitor and enforce parking restriction in the High Street**

Cllr. Waltham asked if traffic wardens had visited the village since District Councillor Sophie Bell had requested them to do so. Cllr. Hammon said that she had seen them in the High Street within the last month.

After discussion, it was agreed to ask EHDC the following.

- The number of vehicles ticketed in the last six months.
- The prosecution records for the village.
- How often the traffic wardens are visiting the village.
- Request that traffic wardens visit the village on a regular basis, with a minimum visit of once a month but preferably once every two weeks.
- Note that due to the school summer holidays parking problems are likely to be reduced.

Action: J. Allsop

14. Find out the most suitable First Aid courses and costings – refer to item 7 d.

15. Contact the person who complained about long grass around the cricket nets

16. Speak to both Bob Spinks & David Payne to define grass cutting areas

17. Contact Ben Storey (Grassroots) re start date for War Memorial groundworks

18. Liaise with Jeff Skidmore Contactors re grass cutting on Watton Green & the Lammas

19. Speak to David Payne to find out what work he has done and when

20. Purchase both sizes of goal post caps

21. Remove laminate posters from tennis court fence

22. Contact businesses and organisations on the website for content updates

23. Put a notice on Facebook about the hazards of children playing in the river

24. Contact Alan Rattue re Parish Council anniversary booklet

d) Action points outstanding

1. Chase painter to find out if he is interested in refurbishing the kiosk

Cllr. Hammon said that she did not get a response from her decorator and he had now finished working at her property. This item to be placed on the September agenda to decide what action should now be taken.

Agenda: 09/19

6. Planning

In the absence of Cllr. McCash, Cllr. Smith reported on the following planning applications.

a) Applications

- **21 Lammas Road (3/19/1277/FUL)**

Single storey extension to the front elevation to include two windows to side elevation

This application is an amendment to a previous application that was refused.

Cllr. Block visited the neighbours at 20 and 22 Lammas Road and both had no objections.

Parish Councillors agreed that the Clerk should submit a no comment response.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Decisions

- i) **42 Rivershill (3/19/0873/HH)**

Conversion and alteration of garage, front infill extension and new detached double garage

-East Herts Council – granted

The following decisions were e-mailed to the Parish Council after the July agenda was published.

- **23 Lammas Road (3/19/0980/HH)**

Erection of two storey extension and conversion of loft space

-East Herts Council – granted

- **6 Rivershill (3/19/1061/HH)**

Single storey rear and side extension incorporating 5 no roof-lights and a new window to the north elevation

-East Herts Council – granted

c) Appeals

- **33 Station Road (3/18/0325/HH) - Appeal reference 19/00098/REFUSE**

Two storey rear extension

Cllr. Smith said that Cllr. Meischke spoke to John Stanley, who informed him that the inspector would be visiting his property on 23rd July, however, he was not allowed to speak to them.

Cllr. Smith said that District Councillor Sophie Bell did contact the planners, who informed her that the Parish Council could not make any comments to the inspector. However, if the appeal is upheld, the planning department are willing to discuss a compromise development with John Stanley.

d) Withdrawn

- **Ballacraine Walkern Road (3/19/0942/HH)**

Single storey side extension, alterations to front porch to create pitched roof. Removal of pitched roof to rear and alterations to fenestration throughout

e) Pre-planning Application Consultation

- **Woodhall Estate, Perrywood Lane, Watton at Stone, Hertford, SG14 2RJ**

Proposed Installation of telecoms apparatus at Ref: 76954

Parish Councillors studied the location of the proposed installation and agreed a no comment response.

The Clerk to e-mail this pre-planning application to Denis Filer, whose property is close by the proposed site.

Action: J. Allsop

7. Specific items

a) Report from District Councillor Sophie Bell

Cllr. Smith read out an e-mail received today from Sophie Bell today.

“I'm hoping to attend but got some last-minute work to do before I can leave the office tonight.

If I can't attend, there aren't really any major updates except to mention that Clarion have agreed to offer some funding for the Scare crow festival.”

b) Neighbourhood plan – progress report

Cllr. Waltham distributed a document to Councillors detailing tasks completed and outstanding in the lead up to a planned public exhibition on the 28th September. One of the outstanding tasks was identifying aspirations for Village Gains to be secured from developments in the parish, and she thanked the Parish Council for agreeing to progress these projects.

Cllr. Waltham went on to say that the steering group had been advised that the consultation/ exhibition should be held as soon as possible to give the Neighbourhood Plan more weight in the planning process.

Cllr. Waltham also reported that certain areas in the village were to be proposed to be designated Green Space and that consultation with landowners would take place as part of that process.

The Parish Council had agreed that there were three Village Gain projects it wanted to consider, the provision of new football facilities in the village, modification to the Community Hall car park and the land adjacent to the Walkern Road development.

Cllr. Waltham said that the transfer of land at Walkern road was proposed by Fairview. Cllrs. Hammon and Waltham also explained that an extension to the Community Hall car park had not so far been considered in the Neighbourhood plan work because it did not emerge in the consultations to date as something the community considered as a priority. They also commented that more discussion amongst the Parish Council would be welcome to establish what the consensus on the council was in relation to developing the Meadow.

There was further discussion on the need to make sure that Gains were not going to prove undeliverable, balanced with the need to push forwards with the Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr. Smith said that it was obvious that further clarification of certain aspects of the neighbourhood plan were needed and that it may be necessary to delay the proposed exhibition.

It was agreed that Cllr. Hammon would join the Gains Committee to ensure good coordination with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Cllr. Smith agreed to carry-out the following actions.

- Arrange an extraordinary meeting of the Gains Committee.
- Speak to East Herts Council about the pitfalls of delaying the exhibition.
- Speak to Ms. Veater, professional advisor to the NP group, concerning the above. **Action: M. Smith**

c) Litterbins

Cllr. Block said that he and Cllr. Smith had fitted had the last 2 lidded bins. They have also relocated one of the old bins to the War Memorial Chapel site, which had a broken bin.

On Monday evening the litterbin along the footpath 17 section of School Lane near the main entrance to the Community Hall was overflowing with rubbish. Cllr. Dinnin said that Rosemary Brown is currently away on holiday and the person doing the litterpicking work on her behalf has now emptied the bin. It was agreed that probably most of this rubbish was from people attending the Cricket matches over the weekend.

Cllr. Smith said that the Parish Council could purchase a large bin, the same style as the one in the Community Hall car park, if there is a need for it. It was agreed to monitor the situation. **Action: M. Smith/Trustees**

It has been noted that the litterbin at the end of the Beadle family seat, near Watkins Hall Farm, is not being emptied and is therefore overflowing. It was agreed to ask David Payne to empty the bin on a regular basis.

Action: M. Smith

d) First Aid training

Cllr. Jancey said she had obtained three quotations for first aid courses with defibrillator training. Some are combined first aid and defibrillator courses and others are first aid only.

The quotations are as follows.

- | | | | |
|---------------------|--|-------|-------|
| • St John Ambulance | up to 30 delegates | £2134 | + VAT |
| • British Red Cross | held at their premises 6 – 15, covers AED's | £719 | + VAT |
| • Onsite First Aid | up to 12 delegates responding to incidents with an AED | £389 | + VAT |

All the above are certified courses.

Cllr. Smith informed Cllr. Jancey that he had investigated VETS training and the Parish Council had advertised in the village and on Facebook, but only 4 people had shown an interest. The system requires ten people living within 400 yards of the defibrillator, so this training option was a non-starter.

After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed that Cllr. Jancey should book a 12-person course with Onsite First Aid for a Saturday morning in October. **Action: K. Jancey**

Cllr. Jancey to liaise with the Clerk re Community Hall availability. **Action: K. Jancey/J. Allsop**

Once the course has been booked, the Clerk to advertise the event on the Parish Council noticeboards, Facebook, the website and in the Parish News. **Action: J. Allsop**

If more than 12 people show an interest, the Parish Council will consider running a second course.

e) Website – annual review

Cllr. Stock said that the Clerk has been contacting businesses and organisations who have entries on the Watton-at-Stone website to determine whether or not their current details need updating in any way. We have had responses from most of the people contacted; with a few outstanding.

The Clerk has established that there are a number of groups who use the War Memorial Hall but do not appear on our website. Cllr. Stock suggested that the Clerk contact them to see if they would be interested in having an entry on the site because the activities may be of interest to the Parish. This was agreed by Parish Councillors. **Action: J. Allsop**

8. Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

Cllr. Block reported on the following item.

- **Monthly accounts**

Cllr. Block said that the monthly accounts include VAT where applicable.

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty cash - Payments	
None		None	
Cheques issued			
Adam Welch	1/2 season strimming and mowing		1,385.00
Bidwells	Allotment 6 month rent		335.00
Rosemary Brown	32 hours litterpick at £8.88		1303.5
HMRC	NI contributions - April to June 2019		270.37
David Payne			187.50
JRB Enterprise	5 boxes of dog waste bags for dispenser		145.20
Glasdon UK limited	2 Salt bins		417.73
Concord Trophies	Engrave 2 perpetual Trophies, purchase & engrave 2 keep-sake		60.80
Adam Welch	clear oak tree limb on Church Walk		150.00
Mark Harrod	Goal inserts – 1 large metal set, 1 plastic small set		59.40
Frank Cooper & Son	3 x Grass cuts		216.00
			4,530.50
Cheques received			
Adam Compton	Allotment rent and £50 deposit		69.00
			69.00

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Tony Silvestri - Pavilion (4	60.00	Philip Smith – travel expenses	54.00
Youth Girls Football – Main Hall	10.00	JMS Archery – Archery Tuition	27.00
Natasha Walsh – Pavilion hire	28.00	Tony Silvestri – Yoga instruction	130.00
Natasha Walsh – donation for toy	5.00		211.00
Active East Herts	456.00		
	559.00		

Cheques issued			
Hertfordshire County Council	Cleaning materials		80.52
Castle Water	Water		20.75
Collier Turf	2 x tennis nets		312.00
Rosemary Brown	23 hours x £8.88		404.24
Herts Fire Protection	Annual fire inspection plus refill of one fire		213.99
			1031.50

Cheques received			
East Herts District Council	Pavilion hire for Local elections		153.60
East Herts District Council	Pavilion hire for European election		153.60
Ben Talbot	Toilet and changing room facilities		60.00
Felicitas Dixon	Main Hall and Pavilion hire		22.00
Badminton Club	Main Hall		142.50
Fran Wright	Main Hall		45.00
Chloe - Bounce	Main Hall		192.00
Paula Sutton	Main Hall		229.90
Peter Khera	Main Hall		181.45
Chloe - Bounce	Main Hall		192.00
			1372.05

Parish Councillors agreed the payments.

- **3-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall**

Cllr. Block highlighted some of the first quarter's income and expenditure items for the Parish Council and the Community Hall accounts. He said that the format has changed so that VAT is taken off income and expenditure where appropriate and are shown as separate items.

The Parish Council are not VAT registered but are able to claim back VAT on expenditure. In this first quarter there is only VAT expenditure as no claim for VAT rebate has been made in 2019/20.

The Community Hall is VAT registered. Hiring income is now shown as net of VAT. VAT on income and VAT rebate from HMRC are shown as two separate items. All VAT expenditure is under one heading and includes VAT on invoices and payments made to HMRC.

- **3-monthly inspection of the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts**

Cllr. Block said that Cllr. McCash carried-out the three-month inspection of the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts on 8th July and they were in good order.

A copy of Cllr. McCash’s reports to be included in the Community Hall and Parish Council accounts for 2019/20. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **BT Phone line**

Cllr. Block said that the Parish Council have been paying for the Clerk’s BT line rental as a one-off annual payment to enable getting one month free. This year the cost is £219.84. In addition, the Parish Council pay for the BT unlimited anytime calls at £9.99 per month and the answer 1571 service at £3.50 as well as £11 towards the Clerks mobile phone contract.

Cllr. Block said that BT offer a new service for £21.99 per month. The package includes BT line rental and unlimited calls to UK landlines for up to an hour. Also included when you opt in are: BT Privacy Caller Display, Anonymous Call Reject, and Free 1471 call return. This package would save the Parish Council £75 per annum.

Parish Councillors agreed to use the new BT service at £21.99 per month plus £3.50 for answer 1571 and to continue to pay £11 per month towards the Clerk’s mobile phone contract. **Action: J. Allsop**

The fax phone calls to Santander are an additional phone charge.

- **Subscription to Parish Online – digital mapping for local councils**

The Neighbourhood Plan committee have requested that the Parish Council sign up for an annual subscription. Cllr. Waltham said that the subscription can be paid for out of the Neighbourhood Plan grant.

Parish Councillors agreed to sign up for Parish Online. **Action: J. Allsop**

Community Hall Trustees

In the absence of Cllr. Meischke, Cllr. Smith reported on the following items.

- **New lock for door to large changing room**

Michael Lewis has fitted a new lock to one of the large changing rooms.

- **Annual Fire Inspection**

Herts Fire Protection carried out the annual inspection of the fire equipment on 26th June. One of the fire extinguishers in the changing room corridor had to be taken away for refilling. The Clerk confirmed that the Herts Fire Protection have returned the refilled fire extinguisher to the Community Hall.

Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee

Cllr. Knight had nothing to report.

Environment Sub-Committee

Cllr. Dinnin reported on the following item.

- **War Memorial**

Cllr. Stock has agreed a start-date of Monday 2nd September with Ben Storey (Grassroots) for phase 1 of the groundworks to the site. He asked Cllr. Dinnin to contact Adam Welch to establish a date for his preparatory work to ensure that it is completed in advance of the 2nd September. **Action: C. Dinnin**

Cllr. Stock to contact Grassroots prior to the start of their works and be available for subsequent site-meetings as required re the siting of the memorial bench and other details. **Action: D. Stock**

- **Tree work on the Meadow**

Cllr. Dinnin e-mailed all Parish Councillors about the Oak tree branch that had fallen across Church Walk. Adam Welch was then instructed to carryout emergency work to remove the part of the branch that was obstructing the footpath and make it safe. The cost of this work was £150.

Cllr. Dinnin then obtained two quotations, which she e-mailed to all Parish Councillors, to clear the fallen Oak limb on the sportsfield side.

- Adam Welch - £490 to clear the fallen limb and remove the logs
£390 to remove the broken Oak tree limb and stack the logs by the tree.
- TreeSmiths – £280 to clear the fallen limb field side and remove all debris from site
£180 to remove the fallen limb, including wood chips and leave all wood on site in as large lengths as possible.

Tree Smith’s quotation of £280 was accepted by Parish Councillors via e-mail and the work has now been done.

Cllr. Dinnin said that TreeSmiths had informed her that this Scarlet Oak tree has a 50-50 chance that it may need to be felled. Cllr. Smith said that having looked at the tree he believed that with some limb work we would be able to save this tree.

As this tree is covered by a TPO it was agreed to contact the Landscape Officer at EHDC, asking them to inspect the tree and advise us accordingly.

Action: M. Smith

Cllr. Dinnin to ask TreeSmiths to do a survey on the Scarlet Oak and e-mail her their report.

Action: C. Dinnin

- **Meeting with Tim Hill (Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust)**

Cllr. Smith said he had arranged for Tim Hill to meet with Parish Councillors on site at the Lammas on 20th August.

Cllr. Stock said it was his understanding that following on from our previous site meeting with Tim Hill we invited him to attend one of our Parish Council meetings (or an ad hoc meeting) to present and discuss his ideas/suggestions for the Lammas (refer May 2019 Parish Council minutes. Item 8 a, Environment Sub-committee – The Lammas). It did appear that some confusion had arisen and therefore a further meeting with Tim may be necessary so that he can address the full Parish Council.

Cllr. Stock is unable to attend the site meeting on 20th and gave his apologies for absence.

- **Annual Tree survey**

Cllr. Dinnin asked the Clerk to find out when Adam Welch last did the annual tree survey.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Grass cutting on Lammas and Watton Green**

Cllr. Dinnin said that she was happy with the quality of work from the new grass cutting contractors (Jeff Skidmore Contractors) who recently cut both Watton Green and the Lammas. However, both Cllr. Dinnin and Cllr. Knight felt that the grass along the riverbank on the Lammas needs to have some gaps cut into it to allow views to the river. Currently the river cannot be seen due to the height of the grass.

Cllr. Smith said that he would speak to Jeff Skidmore Contractors asking them to cut gaps in the grass along the riverbank.

Action: M. Smith

b) Routine Reports

- i) **Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests**

Cllrs Smith and Meischke to do later this week.

Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke

- ii) **Gas and electricity meter readings**

Cllr. Meischke gives the Clerk gas and electricity meter readings at the end of each month and she uploads these readings to the providers websites.

- iii) **Weekly reports - Fire Inspection and shower tests**

None.

- iv) **Monthly village-report**

Cllr. Smith completed the report on 14th July 2019 and e-mailed the Clerk the following report.

- **Sportsfield –**

- **Grass** - suffering because of weather, a bit more trimming required around trim-trail equipment and some grass cutting around the field.

Cllr. Smith to ask David Payne to do the grass cutting and strimming work. **Action: M. Smith**

- **Litter** – satisfactory – bin near School Lane full, consider a larger bin.

- **Dog fouling** – satisfactory.

- **Community Hall** - ball damage to light guards.

- **Allotments**

- **Access** - becoming narrowed.

- **Area nearest to church** - overgrown mostly with forget-me-nots.

- **Culverts** – overgrown with nettles.

- **Footpath 17** – doggy waste bags in place and Mr. Murray has spares.

- **War Memorial** – ready for revamp – some weeds.

- **Defibrillator** – showing green.

- **Comment** – village has tidy appearance overall. Evident that new lidded litterbins are a success.

- v) **Weekly sportsfield**

None.

vi) Weekly defibrillator inspection

Cllr. Hammon agreed to inspect the defibrillator on a weekly basis and keep a record of the inspection dates. The Clerk to purchase a book for Cllr. Hammon to record her defibrillator inspection dates in.

Action: J. Allsop

This item to be added to the monthly agenda.

vii) Website/Facebook.

- First aid course

Action: J. Allsop

viii) Highway and Lighting faults

None.

ix) Dog fouling reports

Cllr. Smith said that 5 boxes of dog waste bags have been purchased for the dispenser on footpath 17.

x) Police reports

Refer to item directly after 2, Public participation.

9. Correspondence received

None.

10. Village organisations**• Scout and Guide Group**

Cllr. Dinnin said that the Scout and Guide Group recently held their AGM but forgot to invite her.

Cllr. Waltham said that she attended the AGM in which they were pleased to report that the Parish Council would be donating a substantial amount of money toward the scout hut project. However, the project is proving to be a much bigger job than anticipated.

11. Items for Parish News

The following items were identified for inclusion in the September 2019 issues of the Parish News.

- First aid course
- Co-option

Action: J. Allsop

The meeting closed 2140.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 17th September 2019.